

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

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P R 121219Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6918

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT 540

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

USINT ALGIERS

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5855

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR SP XF IS

SUBJECT: SPANISH REACTION TO MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

REF: MADRID 5752

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. GOS STATEMENT OCTOBER 11 EXPRESSES TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP TOWARDS ARAB COUNTRIES AND HOPE THAT PROMPT AND JUST PEACE CAN BE ACHIEVED. SPANISH MEDIA HAVE GENERALLY PRESENTED BALANCED PICTURE OF WAR NEWS AS RECEIVED FROM BOTH ADVERSARIES. COMMENTATORS HAVE DEPLORED FAILURE OF UN AND TWO SUPERPOWERS TO PREVENT HOSTILITIES AND STOP WAR WHICH NOW HAS TURNED INTO DRAWN-OUT STRUGGLE THREATENING WORLD PEACE AS WELL AS PETROLEUM SUPPLIES OF WEST. ARABS CREDITED WITH DEMONSTRATING FOR FIRST TIME SENSE OF SOLIDARITY AND MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS, BUT SOME COMMENTATORS AND SPANIARDS EVIDENCE FEARS ABOUT CONSEQUENCES FOR WEST OF ARAB VICTORY. END SUMMARY.

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2. FOLLOWING REGULAR WEEKLY CABINET MEETING CHAIRED BY FRANCO

OCTOBER 11, INFORMATION MINISTER RELEASED FOLLOWING STATEMENT:

BEGIN TEXT: THE GOVERNMENT HAS STUDIED ATTENTIVELY THE CONFLICT RAGING IN THE MIDDLE EAST WHICH WAS REPORTED BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE GOVERNMENT REPEATS ITS TRADITIONAL SENTIMENTS OF FRIENDSHIP OF THE SPANISH PEOPLE TOWARDS THE ARAB COUNTRIES AND PRAYS FOR A PROMPT, JUST AND STABLE PEACE. END TEXT.

3. PRIOR TO GOS CABINET MEETING UAR AND SYRIAN AMBASSADORS CALLED ON FORMIN LOPEZ RODO OCTOBER 10 AND, ACCORDING TO LOCAL PRESS, EXPRESSED THANKS FOR SPAIN'S SUPPORT OF ARAB CAUSE, PARTICULARLY FOR HIS STATEMENT IN UNGA SUPPORTING DEMAND THAT ISRAEL COMPLY WITH UN RESOLUTION ON WITHDRAWAL, TO PRE-1967 BORDERS.

4. SPANISH MEDIA HAVE GENERALLY PRESENTED BALANCED REPORTING OF CONFLICT WITH REFERENCES TO SOURCES OF FILM-CLIPS AND NEWS ITEMS. TV VIEWERS AND NEWSPAPER READERS ARE GIVEN IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, THAT ARABS HAVE OVERCOME MILITARY INFERIORITY AND HAVE DEMONSTRATED UNPRECEDENTED SOLIDARITY IN STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAEL.

5. NEWS COMMENTATORS HAVE BEEN UNANIMOUS IN DEPLORING OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES, HELPLESSNESS OF UN, AND CRITICISM OF US AND USSR FOR PROVIDING ADVERSARIES WITH TOOLS OF WAR. PROBABILITY OF LONG-DRAWN-OUT CONFLICT IS VIEWED AS THREATENING WORLD PEACE INSOFAR AS US-USSR DETENTE COULD BE UPSET BY PRESSURES TO SAVE PARTIES IN CONFLICT. MANY COMMENTATORS VIEW STRUGGLE AGAINST BACKDROP OF WORLD ENERGY CRISIS, WHOSE TIMING GIVES ARABS AN ADVANTAGE.

6. MFA OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF GOS WAS TRYING TO AVOID ANY INVOLVE-MENT IN CONFLICT. HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR CONCERN FOR POSSIBLE EFFECTS ON OIL SUPPLY FOR WEST EUROPE AND SPAIN. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, THOUGH HE MAY HAVE BEEN REFLECTING THINKING IN MFAJN HE OPINED THAT IT WAS TRAGIC THAT ISRAELIS HAD NOT OFFERED GENEROUS SETTLEMENT IN WAKE OF 1967 WAR WHICH WOULD HAVE ASSURED THEIR INTEGRITY IN THE PRE-1967 BOUNDARIES. HOWEVER, HE ADDED, OVERWHELMING ARAB VICTORY WOULD BE DISASTER
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FOR WEST, INFLATING ARAB SELF-ASSERTIVENESS.

7. COMMENT: GOS STATEMENT CITED PARA 2 ABOVE IS FIRST OFFICIAL GOS STATEMENT ON CONFLICT SINCE RELEASE OF MFA STATEMENT RE: NON-USE OF SPANISH BASES IN CONFLICT (REFTEL). IT SEEMS SUBDUED IN LIGHT FREQUENT PROFESSIONS OF CLOSE SPANISH TIES WITH ARABS. HOWEVER, IT IS CONSISTENT WITH INDICATIONS THAT GOS SEEKING TO REMAIN ALOOF FROM CONFLICT. WHILE SUPPORTING ARAB CLAIMS TO

RECOVERY OF ISRAEL-OCCUPIED TERRITORY, SPANISH APPARENTLY
APPREHENSIVE THAT DECISIVE ARAB VICTORY WOULD LEAD TO
INCREASED PRESSURES AGAINST SPANISH INTERESTS, NOTABLY IN
SPANISH SAHARA AND ENCLAVES OF CEUTA AND MELILLA.
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